(b) Following important actions have been taken for conservation and development of forests and for increasing forest cover of the country:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State/UT Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.

(iii) Guidelines to all State/UT Governments to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands.

(v) A network of protected areas has been established.

(vi) Recently, Ministry has prepared a National Forestry Action Plan to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through improvement in investment for conservation and development of forest resources.

Air Pollution in Delhi

1426. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Tata Energy Research Institute, after sampling the air in one of the city greenbed area-Lodi Road, has found that the air is more dustier today even though the Supreme Court's decision to drive out old vehicles has to reduce air pollution in Delhi to a great extent;

(b) if so, what are Government's findings; and

(c) what steps Government are planning/taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The findings of the Tata Energy Research

Institute (TERI) in respect of air pollution is based on monitoring done in limited area. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has been monitoring air quality at a number of locations through a network of ambient air quality monitoring stations in Delhi. The air quality data of Delhi, as being monitored by CPCB, has indicated a downward trend in comparison to 1998 air quality data. CPCB has also initiated a study in collaboration with Indian Insititute of Technology, Kanpur for development Air Quality Index for India.

Notification of Kondakamberu and Gupteswar in Orissa as Wild Life Sanctuaries

1427. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the forest department of Orissa has delayed the notification of Kondakamberu and Gupteswar as wild life sanctuaries, thereby causing extinction of the local Wild buffalo;

(b) what are the details regarding the areas recommended by the State Wild Life Advisory Board of Orissa since 1980 to be declared as Wild Life Sanctuaries, under the Wildlife Protection Act, recommendation-wise; and

(c) the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The State Government of Orissa has informed that the State Wildlife Advisory Board had made recommendations regarding Kondakamberu and Gupteswar being declared as Wildlife Sanctuaries. The State Government has decided to process only the proposal for declaring Kondakamberu as Weldlife Sanctuary. Since the area encompasses large number of villages no final decision has been taken by the State Government regarding the boundaries of the proposed wildlife sanctuary.